

LABRADOR SCHOOL BOARD
POLICY AND PARAMETERS FOR DETERMINING
CURRENTLY MODERN STANDARDS

DATE APPROVED:

DATE CIRCULATED: April 7, 1997

PREAMBLE

Under section 75 of the Schools Act (1997), the duties of the School Board include organizing and administering primary, elementary and secondary education within the district, determining policy for the effective operation of schools in the district, appointing and assigning the duties of teachers, and ensuring that each school maintains adequate programs and performance standards. To enable the School Board to meet its obligation under the Act, it will endeavor to employ competent, suitable and qualified teachers. When it becomes necessary to reassign teachers as the result of redundancies in the system, the School Board will determine the teachers' capabilities and overall abilities based on seniority and in accordance with the currently modern standards provision of the Collective Agreement.

CURRENTLY MODERN STANDARDS

The School Board defines Currently Modern Standards as the criteria reasonably determined by the Board against which the capabilities and overall abilities of a teacher are judged to determine the compatibility between their capabilities and abilities, and the current requirements of the position.

EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS

It is the intent of the Labrador School Board to have competent and well qualified teachers and administrators employed in the schools in the district. Selection of school staff will be in accordance with Articles 6/43 of the Collective Agreements. Article 6:03 specifically states that *"the basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the School Board"*.

In its assessment the Board will consider the candidate's level of training to determine whether or not he/she is best suited to teach at the primary, elementary, intermediate or senior high levels. Also, the candidate's area of speciality will be assessed against the school's requirements. For example, a candidate with at least a major in biology and an internship and methods courses in senior high school science would be a qualified candidate for a vacancy in biology. The Board will also assess scholarship and academic performance through an evaluation of the candidate's university transcripts. Finally, the candidate's overall ability will be rated to determine the strength of the individual's character, motivation, initiative, communication skills, leadership skills and professional conduct. It is preferred that a suitably qualified candidate also be an experienced teacher.

No candidate will be selected into a position without an interview and a thorough reference check.

REASSIGNMENT OF TEACHERS

In recent years the school district is experiencing declining enrolments which result in staff reassignment and layoffs. Redundancies and teacher reassignments can have a disruptive effect on the school system. Reassignments and layoffs will be managed in accordance with Articles 9/48 of the Collective Agreements, and will be, based on seniority, subject to the capability of fulfilling the requirements of the job functions of a particular position.

Articles 9:04/48:04 of the Collective Agreements specifically state that “*in determining capability to fulfill the requirements of the job function, the School Board shall consider the overall ability of the teacher to perform the functions of the position in accordance with the currently modern standards required for the position.*” Clearly the assessment of teachers’ overall abilities rests with the professional judgement of the School Board.

CLASSIFICATIONS

The School Board recognizes the following classifications of teaching staff within its employ:

- Primary-Elementary
- Intermediate-Senior High
- Specialist
- Special Services
- Administration
- Program Specialists

The nature of the learner is different at various levels of development. Teaching strategies vary and different approaches to student behaviour are required. Teachers, therefore, have received specialized university training in specific areas, including courses in subject area pedagogy (methods courses) and an internship. This training must be taken into account when considering reassignment.

For a teaching position with other program responsibilities or duties built into the job description, the Board may require of the reassigned teacher the qualifications and capability to do all of the work of the position being displaced. Should the Board feel that all of the responsibilities cannot be satisfactorily performed by the teacher being considered for reassignment, then the Board will not offer him or her that position.

TRANSFERS ACROSS CLASSIFICATIONS

In general, within the context of Articles 9:02, 9:03 and 9:05/48:02, 48:03, 48:04(b), staff members will not be transferred or reassigned from one classification to another. However, the School Board in its professional judgement may exercise some flexibility in transferring or reassigning teachers when, in the opinion of the Board, the teacher has the skills, training and experience necessary to fulfill the requirement to perform satisfactorily in another classification. Only by exceptions based on certain special talents and experience, will teachers be transferred

or reassigned across classifications.

PRIMARY-ELEMENTARY (K-6)

Instruction at this level requires teachers who have training and experience in teaching methods which reflect the latest theories of learning related to the age group of their students. This training must include the relevant methods courses and internship.

INTERMEDIATE-SENIOR HIGH (7-12)

The assignment or reassignment of teachers to this classification will be based on their subject specialization, training and experience. A subject speciality is determined from the teacher's university transcripts. It is preferred that the teacher have a major in the subject area that constitutes the greatest proportion of the teaching assignment. For example, it is preferred that a teacher who is teaching 50 percent or more of his or her time in mathematics should have a major (12 semester courses) and at least two (2) educational methods courses and an internship in that subject area. It is recognized, however, that in small schools it is not always possible to maintain a full complement of capable staff. Under these circumstances the Board may assign teachers with less than a major in a subject area, but the Board will seek at least a minor (6 semester courses) in that area.

It is recognized as well that special skills and talents are required to teach adolescents at the intermediate-senior high level, and therefore teachers filling positions at this level must have the experience and training necessary to qualify them to teach at this level.

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Specialist teachers are teachers whose qualifications make them eligible, in accordance with Departmental regulations, to receive an allowance. These include guidance, home economics, physical education, music, industrial arts and fine arts. Such teachers possess expertise based on training and experience to work with all age levels. However, the Board will endeavour to match the speciality with the grade level classification. For example, a primary teacher who later trains to be a guidance counsellor will only be placed as a guidance counsellor at the primary and elementary level.

SPECIAL SERVICES POSITION

Special services positions are given to teachers who work with special needs students. These teachers could be special education teachers.

- A. Special education teachers can be subdivided into teachers for students identified as non-categorical, challenging needs (Category C - Mentally Handicapped), challenging needs (Category D - Physically Handicapped).

The minimum qualifications for teachers so identified is a B.Sp.Ed. Degree. Teachers may transfer or be reassigned within these subdivisions if, in the opinion of the Board, they have the necessary skills of behaviour management and individual programming needed for the position. Teachers already working in this area without a special education degree are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications.

B. Other teachers given special services assignments could be:

- Speech-Language Pathologists
- English Second Language Teachers
- Teachers for the Visually Impaired
- Teachers for the Hearing Impaired

All of these teachers require specialized training in their area of assignment and a degree in education. Teachers in this grouping can only transfer or be reassigned if they can demonstrate that they have the qualifications, experience and understanding of the appropriate programming needed for the position.

C. Teachers may be given special services positions in Educational Therapy or Educational Psychology. The minimum qualifications required for these positions is an M.Ed. In Guidance and Counselling or an M.Ed. In Educational Psychology. Educational Psychologists should also meet the requirements as outlined in the Psychologists' Act. Teachers in this grouping can only transfer or be reassigned to other positions if they can demonstrate that they have the qualifications, experience and understanding of the appropriate programming needed for that position.

ADMINISTRATORS

All personnel presently holding administrative positions, and those aspiring to become administrators are encouraged to obtain graduate degrees in education and to continue to upgrade accordingly. It is especially important that school administrators be knowledgeable in the areas of leadership, school improvement and school councils.

PROGRAM SPECIALISTS

The position of program specialist requires approval from the Department of Education. The Departmental policies outline the requirements of training and experience required for this position. Teachers given this position can only transfer to other positions if they can demonstrate that they have the qualifications, experience and understanding of the appropriate programming needed for that position.

UNAVAILABILITY OF FULLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

The Director or his/her designate may, with the assistance of the Human Resources Committee and/or other district personnel, determine whether to recommend assignment or reassignment to a vacant position a candidate with lesser qualifications when a fully qualified candidate cannot be found. The School Board may also require these candidates to upgrade to fulfill the requirements of the position as soon as practicable. Such action shall in no way detract from the Board's resolve to make assignments and reassignments in accordance with the principles set out in these parameters.

TRANSCRIPTS OF UNIVERSITY COURSES

The Board requires current information regarding university training if it is to make responsible decisions about the hiring of new staff and the transfer, assignment or reassignment of teachers

currently on staff. Towards that end, the following policies shall be in effect:

- A. In all advertisements for vacancies there shall be a requirement that applications include an updated university transcript.
- B. When new staff are hired, they will be required to supply an updated university transcript to be kept in their file at the Central Office, and will agree to keep this transcript updated as further courses or degrees are acquired.
- C. When the Board declares a redundancy and the capability of staff is at issue, it will require an updated university transcript from all teachers affected by the redundancy. Failure to supply such transcripts within a reasonable time will require the Board to rely on the most recently available transcripts.

KEEPING FILES CURRENT

The onus is on the teacher to keep district files current by supplying district office with copies of updated university transcripts and documentation on training and inservices as it is completed.

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